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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA POLITICAL ROUNDUP APRIL 8, 2004  
(INTERNATIONAL ROMA DAY)

"LITTLE GROUP" CASE CLOSED: IT DOESN'T EXIST  
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1. THE POLICE CLOSED ITS INVESTIGATION BY DISMISSING AS NONEXISTENT THE "LITTLE GROUP" (SKUPINKA) THAT PM MIKULAS DZURINDA CLAIMED WAS HARMING STATE INTERESTS LAST FALL. THE INVESTIGATION'S CONCLUSION INVITED FURTHER CRITICISM FROM HUNGARIAN COALITION PARTY CHAIR BELA BUGAR, SMER DEPUTY ROBERT KALINAK (WHO PUBLICLY EXPOSED DZURINDA'S LIST), AND NEWLY ELECTED FREE FORUM CHAIR ZUZANA MARTINAKOVA. DZURINDA SAID HE TESTIFIED ON WHAT HE KNEW AND HE DOES NOT REGRET OPENING THE CASE OR THAT SDKU LOST DEPUTIES AS A RESULT.

UPDATE FROM TREBISOV  
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2. THE FAMILY OF RADOSLAV PUKY, A ROM WHO DIED IN TREBISOV UNDER UNCLEAR CIRCUMSTANCES AFTER DISAPPEARING DURING THE FEBRUARY 24 POLICE ACTION, HAS REPORTEDLY ACCEPTED THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S DETERMINATION OF ACCIDENTAL DEATH BY DROWNING DEATH AND IS NOT WILLING TO EXHUME THE BODY FOR A SECOND AUTOPSY. THE POLICE HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY PURSUING USURERS IN TREBISOV, WHO ARE RUMORED TO BE ESPECIALLY STRONG AND CONTROL THE CITY SIMILAR TO THE MAFIA. HOWEVER, IT IS DIFFICULT TO PROVE USURY SINCE ROMA FREQUENTLY ARE NOT WILLING TO TESTIFY.

3. ADDITIONAL POLICE AND MILITARY ARE STILL DEPLOYED IN EASTERN SLOVAKIA. THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER INSTANCES OF LOOTING OR LARGE PROTESTS. THERE WAS ONLY ONE PROTEST BY CITIZENS FROM RICHNAVA IN SPISSKA NOVA VES. THIS HIGHLY ORGANIZED ROMA COMMUNITY RECENTLY SUCCEEDED IN RECALLING A MAYOR DEEMED UNSYMPATHETIC TO THEIR CONCERNS.

TOWN WANTS TO MOVE ROMA SETTLEMENT  
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4. THE ROMA SETTLEMENT IN LETANOVCE, LOCATED METERS FROM THE SLOVAK PARADISE NATIONAL PARK, IS SLATED TO BE MOVED. FOR YEARS, PEOPLE HAVE COMPLAINED THAT ROMA ARE STEALING WOOD FROM THE PARK AND HARMING THE AREA'S ECOLOGY. MAYORS OF NEIGHBORING VILLAGES SPISSKY STVRTOK (PRIME MINISTER DZURINDA'S BIRTHPLACE), HRABUSICE, AND JANOVCE ACCUSED LETANOVCE OF VIOLATING A PREVIOUS AGREEMENT AND BUYING LAND FOR ROMA CLOSER TO THEIR VILLAGES. THE HRABUSICE MAYOR COMMENTED IN THE ROMA PRESS THAT LETANOVCE HAS NOT DEALT WITH THE ROMA PROBLEM IN THE LAST TEN YEARS AND SHOULD NOT PAWN THEM OFF. SPISSKY STVRTOK HAS BEGUN A PETITION AGAINST MOVING THE SETTLEMENT, WHICH WOULD BE ON THE MAIN ROAD INTO THE NATIONAL PARK AND METERS FROM THE FIRST HOME OF THEIR VILLAGE.

5. THIS CASE ILLUSTRATES THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN ROMA AND MAINSTREAM POPULATIONS. LETANOVCE'S PREVIOUS MAYOR REFUSED RESIDENCY TO SOME ROMA AND REFUSED EU PHARE PROGRAM FUNDING FOR HOUSING. THE CITY COUNCIL HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CREATE A DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY THAT INCLUDES ROMA IN ORDER TO DRAW FROM STATE FUNDS. THE SETTLEMENT IS ABOUT A KILOMETER FROM THE VILLAGE AND MOST STUDENTS ATTEND THE "SPECIAL SCHOOL" FOR MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN.

CSAKY ANNOUNCES THE DECADE OF SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR ROMA  
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6. SLOVAKIA HAS THE LARGEST ROMA POPULATION IN EUROPE. TO PREPARE FOR THE 2005-2015 "DECADE OF ROMA" CONCEIVED AT THE WORLD BANK CONFERENCE LAST JUNE, SLOVAKIA WILL CREATE A WORKING GROUP AND AN ADVISORY BOARD CONSISTING OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, YOUNG ROMA LEADERS, NGOS, AND MEMBERS OF THE EXISTING COMMISSION FOR THE ROMA COMMUNITY. PRIORITIES WILL BE HOUSING AND UNEMPLOYMENT. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND MINORITIES PAL CSAKY ANNOUNCED THAT HIS OFFICE WILL SYNCHRONIZE ACTIVITIES WITH THE HUNGARIAN MINISTRY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, WHICH WILL HEAD THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE REGION.

THAYER

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